

Wednesday 24 June 2020

Nearly a third of office workers never want to return to the office

29% of office workers, expecting to stay in the same or similar role, no longer want to spend any time working from the office

UK employees are expecting a more flexible way of working once the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. Over half (55%) would like to change the times that they work, including their start/finish times or work their hours across fewer days, compared with before Covid-19. UK employees are expecting to be able to make these changes, with 59% believing their employer will allow the changes they want, and 40% prepared to change jobs if not allowed. These results are from a representative survey of 1,500 adult UK residents undertaken by transport and research consultancy SYSTRA, between 4th-12th June 2020.

Key findings include:

- 29% of office workers never want to return to the office, instead wanting to work from home.
 - Of those that commute by rail or bus, this increases to 32%.
- 55% of UK workers would like to work more flexibly, including changing their start/finish times or working their hours across fewer days, compared with before Covid-19.
- 37% of 5-day-a-week office workers want to return to the same pattern.
- 59% think it is likely their employer will let them make the changes they want to their work location or working patterns.
- 40% think it is likely they will change jobs if their employer does not allow them to make the changes they want to.

Public transport operators will need to adapt and consider their ticketing products to meet new commuter behaviours, and the traditional peak/off-peak travel times may disappear. However, not everyone can or wants to adapt their working hours or location – those not office based are more likely to want to stay working at the same location, and many workers, including key workers, may have no flexibility over when or where they work.

Evelyn Robertson, SYSTRA's Research Lead says: *"These findings suggest that travel behaviour may permanently be affected by the impact of Covid-19. It is imperative that transport operators adapt to ensure that passengers are still encouraged to use public transport, whilst not excluding those for whom flexible working is not an option. Operators must seek to understand passenger needs with new, more flexible working patterns."*

Neill Birch, SYSTRA's Director of Public Transport, says: *"Public transport is well overdue a ticketing revolution. Operators will need to carefully consider how their ticketing products will appeal to a passenger base demanding more flexibility. Pricing will need to be carefully management to cover peaks which may be certain days of the week, not just times of the day."*

For more information please visit: <https://www.systra.co.uk/en/newsroom-37/latest-news/article/nearly-a-third-of-office-workers-never-want-to-return-to-the-office>



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ABOUT SYSTRA

SYSTRA keeps the world moving through connecting people and places. By enabling mobility, our work strengthens communities, increases social inclusion and improves people's access to employment, education and leisure opportunities. Our specialist social and market research team undertake evidence-based transport research to provide consumer and stakeholder insights, supporting policy developments and developing transport solutions that enhance movement, places and the quality of people's lives.

Notes to Editor:

1. Office workers are defined as those who spend 3 or more days a week working in an office environment.
2. The survey took place between Wednesday 4th - Tuesday 12th June 2020 with a representative sample of 1,504 UK adults.
3. The survey covered the following regions: London, South East (excluding London), South West, West Midlands, East Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside, North West, North East, East, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.
4. SYSTRA is undertaking further behavioural modelling to understand the wider impacts of the Covid-19 for the UK.
5. In April 2020, SYSTRA undertook research with the UK public to understand their attitudes and anticipated behaviours after Covid-19. The results can be found here <https://www.systra.co.uk/en/newsroom-37/latest-news/article/public-transport-passengers-say-they-could-make-fewer-trips-after-pandemic>
6. In the UK, SYSTRA provides Transport Planning Consultancy and Rail and Urban Transport engineering services. We work with our clients to think through complex issues concerning the location and movement of people, goods and services – as well as helping them maximise the potential of their own businesses. We have been providing Transport Consultancy services in the UK for over 50 years and have an excellent reputation for the provision of high quality, robust and independent advice to our clients. SYSTRA is a UK registered subsidiary of SYSTRA Group.
7. In 2019, SYSTRA doubled the size of its UK & Ireland operations through the acquisition of TSP Projects, a multidisciplinary engineering firm formed in 1987 with a rich heritage in rail. The combined company provides clients with a complete end-to-end service spanning every aspect of rail projects, as well as specialist understanding of mobility and complex infrastructure. We deliver expertise across the full project lifecycle, from strategic advisory and design to systems integration, programme/construction management, testing & commissioning, and asset management. This expertise will be delivered through a significantly expanded UK footprint, providing clients with a highly localised service.
8. SYSTRA led [BP's Future of Transport Study](#) published October, 2019.
9. For more information on forthcoming announcements visit our web site www.systra.co.uk



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